



THE BEACON

Newsletter of the Wisconsin Deafblind Technical Assistance Project

Upcoming Events

Teen Getaway Weekend Jr.
Friday, November 7 -
Sunday, November 9, 2014
Wisconsin Lions Camp,
Rosholt, WI

This weekend is designed for middle school students who are hard of hearing, deaf or deafblind.

For more information go to:
http://www.wesp-dhh.wi.gov/wesp/out_teengetawayjr.cfm or contact Dan Houlihan at daniel.houlihan@wesp-dhh.wi.gov.

Coming Soon

Our next newsletter will highlight our new website and also some new toys in our lending library.



WISCONSINTIPS AND TOOLS CONFERENCE

Submitted by Jodi Anderson

On July 16 and 17, WDBTAP had the privilege of hosting Barbara Miles for the annual Tips and Tools presentation in Baraboo, WI. This session is part of the summer workshops presented by the WESP-DHH Summer Institute Series. Barbara Miles is a well-known author and lecturer in the field of deafblindness and presented her discussion on Conversations: The beginnings of communication and language and the skillful use of touch and hands with children who are deafblind. Barbara began her discussion by sharing some stories to illustrate the importance of understanding blindness, perception, and touch and how they are so inter-related to one another.

The New Barrette

The story of the new barrette was brought up several times and illustrates her point beautifully. A little girl who is blind came into her pre-school class eager to show off her new

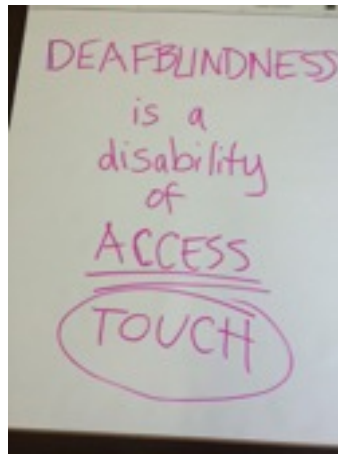
barrette to her teacher. She rushes over to her teacher and exclaims, "Look at my beautiful new barrette!" The teacher looks and says "oh, it is so lovely" but the little girl pouts and says "No, you didn't look it at!" It was not until

the teacher went over and actually felt the barrette that the little girl knew that the teacher “saw” the barrette in the same manner that she did to be able to comment on the beauty of it. She needed the tactile feedback to confirm that the teacher saw her barrette. In the same manner, our children who are deafblind do not have reliable access to vision and hearing and need that tactile feedback through touch to confirm that you have understood them.

The Steps of Language Development

Barbara emphasizes that when it comes to language and conversation; conversation always comes first and should be the focus of interactions. The steps of language development were briefly discussed: resonance and mutual attention, joint attention, exposure, recognition, understanding, and production. Too often, there is not enough time spent on development of language and too much focus on the production of language. Just because a child is not producing signs, does not mean progress is not being made and that learning is not occurring. IEP goals can be written to include these steps of development; example: Given a conversation partner who honors the child’s conversation style (actions), the child will participate in turn-taking (mutual attention) x number of times.

The Functions of the Hands for a



Person with Deafblindness were Covered.

- **Eyes - the hands must act as the eyes, getting information about the physical world.**
- **Ears – hands act as ears and receive language and get information about sound around us.**
- **Voice – hands are used to communicate, express feelings and thoughts**
- **Tools – hands are tools that act upon the world to do tasks.**
- **Vehicles for self-regulation - hands are used in this capacity to help keep the nervous system stable, the negative term for this behavior is self-stimulation**

It is important to be observant and notice what function the

hands are serving to help touch and interact appropriately. Always leave the hands of the person who is deafblind free so he or she is aware that his or her hands are indeed their own. Your hands should be available to the child and ready to “listen” by offering an up-turned hand. Trust needs to be developed so that both sets of hands are comfortable with one another and able to follow as you move, sign, touch things, and act in the world.

WDBTAP STAFF

Marcy Dicker,
Project Director
Jolene Gruber,
Grant Coordinator
Heidi Hollenberger,
Deafblind Consultant
Jodi Anderson,
Family Specialist
Lynn Brekke,
Office Associate

MEET THE STAFF



JODI, MARCUS, GRAHAM AND LIAM

My name is Jodi Anderson and I am the new Family Specialist for WDBTAP. My husband Marcus and I live in Fond du Lac and we have two boys: Graham is six and Liam is seven. Liam became deafblind at the age of three after contracting bacterial

meningitis and having a stroke. He is totally blind and has a cochlear implant on the right side. I work full-time at St. Agnes Hospital in Fond du Lac as a Nuclear Medicine Technologist and will be working part-time for WDBTAP.

As the Family Specialist, it is my job to help plan and support programs provided by or in collaboration with WESP-DHH Outreach for the parents of children with combined vision and hearing losses. This would include Regional Family Meetings, the State Family Conference, and other educational support programs and resources. I am also responsible for providing advisory and leadership services to state agencies and local and/or regional programs and organizations regarding the needs of parents of children with combined vision and hearing loss and to assist in the development of a statewide network of parents with deaf-blind children. I am here for you, the parents, so please feel free to contact me and I will try my best to help in any way that I can or help find the answer for you. I can be reached at the WDBTAP cell 262-581-7433 or at frogglobe4@gmail.com.

Once you choose hope, anything's possible.

~Christopher Reeve

And In Baraboo

Lynn Brekke is the new office associate at WDBTAP. Lynn will be working part-time in our Baraboo Office. Her hours will be 8 am to 12 pm Tuesday through Thursday. Lynn will be coordinating our new database and website, maintaining the lending library, preparing our newsletter as well as any other tasks that arise. Please feel free to contact her with any questions or comments or submissions for newsletter or website by email at lynn.brekke@wesp-dhh.wi.gov or by phone 608-356-2303.



What Types of Technical Assistance Does

WDBTAP provide?

- Parent/Family trainings and assistance in connecting families with one another
- Statewide and regional workshops for service providers and families
- Observation, support and coaching in programming for children
- Intensive deafblind training series for paraprofessionals who work one on one with children and youth who are deafblind
- Assistance in identifying children and youth who are deafblind
- Referral to relevant local, regional, and national agencies
- Lending library with materials, equipment, and toys to benefit deafblind children/youth on the Registry

Wisconsin DeafBlind Technical Assistance Project

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